

# Moreau Catholic High School

A Focus on Learning

Western Catholic Education Association and  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**Third-Year WCEA-WASC Progress Report**

**June 2009**



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## **Changes at Moreau Catholic since the 2006 Self-Study Report**

Since the previous WCEA-WASC visit to Moreau Catholic in 2006, the school has completed several major initiatives focused on meeting student needs.

### **Transforming Tomorrow Campaign**

Throughout 2006 and into the fall of 2007, Moreau launched the building project associated with the Transforming Tomorrow campaign. The Transforming Tomorrow campaign represented the first large capital campaign for Moreau Catholic. By completion in the fall of 2007, Moreau Catholic successfully raised more than \$2.2 million toward the expansion of its library, creation of a new student video production studio, the addition of a new state of the art science lab and improved front lobby and administrative offices.

The total investment from the school was more than \$8.2 million and increased the school's square footage by 9,015 feet. Contributions to the campaign included leadership gifts from The Valley Foundation and Y&H Soda Foundation, along with the generous support of Moreau alumni, alumni parents, current families, faculty and staff and community members.

### **One to One Laptop Program**

With the opening of the new school building, Moreau also simultaneously initiated the launch of the One to One laptop program at the freshmen and sophomore levels. This decision came after ongoing needs assessment from the Technology Committee, the Finance Committee, and Academic Council. Over the course of the subsequent three years, all four grade levels would be fully integrated with the one to one laptop program.

Starting in the fall of 2006, a group of two teachers from each department was brought together to serve as *trailblazers*. These teachers received their laptops in August 2006, four months prior to all other faculty. This group was given the opportunity to work closely with an Apple professional trainer to help them learn about the laptop tool, and begin to integrate technology learning into the curriculum.

In January 2007, all remaining faculty members received their Apple MacBook laptops along with two days of extensive tool training. Throughout the remainder of the school year, the focus for professional learning was on preparing for the one to one laptops, and increasing faculty comfort with the tool. In August 2007, with all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students (approximately 500 in total), receiving either a leased laptop computer, or having purchased an Apple MacBook laptop, the shift in professional learning moved away from just tool training, to include pedagogical growth in the area of increasing student centered practices.

At Moreau Catholic, laptop learning is more than just putting a computer in the hands of every student; it is about providing students with the opportunity to authentically develop the necessary 21st century learning skills that will be crucial to their success in competing in our global society. Students are developing the skills to be analytical, critical thinkers, capable of navigating a rich digital environment in order to build learning networks, and develop their own community of learners. Through these first two years of the laptop program, we have seen students grow in many different ways. Most importantly, we are seeing a shift in teaching, moving toward project based learning, involving authentic assessments of students' mastery of the content area.

Most recently, Moreau Catholic High School was selected as one of the few innovative,

21st century, 1 to 1 laptop schools from across the nation to participate in developing Challenge Based curriculum, integrating 21st century skills and outcomes, in a culture of innovation and creativity using 24/7 access to tools and resources. On November 20–21, 2008, a team of five teachers participated in an intensive workshop with fellow Apple laptop schools from across the United States. The teachers then returned to Moreau to pilot the Challenge Based Learning curriculum within their classrooms.

## **Processes and Procedures for Monitoring the Schoolwide Action Plan**

Moreau Catholic High School is dedicated to the ongoing review and assessment of both the school-identified action plan items and the WCEA-WASC Visiting Committee critical areas of follow-up. This action plan serves as a road map in the school's ongoing strategic planning and school improvement processes.

Since the previous WCEA-WASC visit to Moreau Catholic in 2006, the school has continued to keep its Focus Groups intact and to meet annually in order to work on the school improvement processes. On November 28, 2006, Focus Groups met to review the Category B Belief Statement. Focus groups used specific guide questions to consider what evidence would support the efficacy of the belief statement. On September 25, 2007, Focus Groups met to review Category C Belief Statement and evaluate the extent to which the belief statement accurately reflected our current practices. In addition to reviewing the Belief Statement, groups also analyzed our progress in four of the Action Items that fell under Category C.

In preparation for Moreau Catholic's third-year progress report, Focus Groups convened on October 29, 2008 to review one specific action plan item or WCEA-WASC Visiting Committee critical area of follow-up. Groups looked at examples of both progress and still needed areas of growth.

After each Focus Group meeting, the findings were presented to both the Leadership Team and the Mission Integration Committee.

Academic Council, comprised of all schoolwide Department Chairs, has also regularly been reviewing progress on the schoolwide Action Plan items and WCEA-WASC recommendations. Yearly, Academic Council has evaluated the progress, and identified continued areas of needed growth.

In addition to the Focus Group's work, the Leadership Team has also continued to remain focused on the Action Items. Immediately following the 2006 WCEA-WASC visit, the team spent their July 2006 retreat focused on developing the "Structures and Frameworks to Implement our Schoolwide Action Plan and WCEA-WASC Recommendations". Faculty member and previous WCEA-WASC coordinator, Cheryl Steeb, facilitated the two-day retreat. The subsequent Leadership Team retreats in June 2007 and August 2008 also focused on our schoolwide progress in meeting the Action Plan items and WCEA-WASC recommendations.

## **Action Plan**

### ***Action Item #1: Commitment to ESLRs***

Authenticate the purpose, meaning, and value of the ESLRs among all stakeholders of the school.

#### **Progress Updates:**

With the inclusion of the laptop program, and student's increased access to technology, Moreau Catholic made a conscientious effort to change student course evaluations from a paper submission process, to an electronic submission. This change allowed for access to clearer data about instruction, courses, and the inclusion of the ESLRs. Individual teachers and department chairs are provided with data regarding the extent to which students feel the course has addressed the four ESLRs. Department discussions have then included an evaluation of how the ESLRs are being integrated as part of the content area, identifying strengths and opportunities for growth.

Departments have also begun to integrate ESLR assessments as part of student's final exam. Students are asked to reflect upon how they addressed particular ESLRs through their content learning.

The athletic department has also begun to include particular ESLRs as part of their sports evaluation process, to ascertain students' growth in various areas. ESLRs have also been integrated as part of the Sprit Week skits.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Moreau Catholic also launched online curriculum mapping through *Collaborative Learning, Inc.* This decision came as a result of the 2007-2008 professional learning, and the curriculum review conducted by Academic Council. Through the use of monthly diary maps, teachers are able to link curriculum with specific ESLRs being addressed. Teachers and departments are then able to pull data from *Curriculum Mapper* in order to evaluate the extent to which ESLRs are being integrated through the content area. As part of our three-year long-term goal, we will continue to use the *Curriculum Mapper* software to assess gaps in the inclusion of our ESLRs.

#### **Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Continuing with curriculum mapping as a way to analyze the inclusion of ESLRs across all levels and all disciplines; identify areas of strength and potential gaps
- Commitment for all teachers to include ESLRs on content area assessments and assignments
- Utilize online survey tools for students to reflect on their growth in reaching the ESLRs

### ***Action Item #2: Curriculum for all Students***

Review and improve curricular programs to stimulate and develop the academic, social and spiritual capacities of all our students.

## **Progress Updates:**

Academic Council conducted during the 2006-2007 school year a curriculum review, which brought together members from various departments to discuss curriculum practices and engage in cross-curricular dialogues. The focus of the year was on the *Critical Analysis of Student Learning* (CASL program from the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Design). Each month was focused on analyzing student work samples in connection with the school's ESLRs. As a result of this, it was determined that more foundational alignment of pedagogy and practice was needed to ensure all faculty were using research-based educational practices.

Therefore, the 2007-2008 school year was focused on reading *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids* by author Carol Ann Tomlinson. Key concepts from the book were integrated into department meetings, faculty meetings and Academic Council meetings. Professional learning days, focused on particular chapters, allowed for department and cross-departmental conversations around teaching and learning.

Through the schoolwide professional learning over the last two years, there has been a concerted effort to shift toward creating student centered classrooms where independent and collaborative learning are consistently used to engage students in their own knowledge building.

In response to the changing needs of our student population, a fourth counselor was hired to work with a smaller section of the alphabet and coordinate the special needs program for Learning Difference students. This counselor is responsible for implementing, coordinating, and sustaining the Saints and Scholars Program. Part of the program includes working closely with parents, students and teachers, to ensure their success at Moreau Catholic.

Student publications have also made a concerted effort to communicate on the academic, social and spiritual capacities of students. Through the Journalism program, MCTV and Yearbook, students are sharing more examples of how students are able to balance all three dimensions as part of their Moreau Catholic education.

Through the integration of technology across the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade years, the school has also focused on increasing student understanding of the appropriate uses of technology, and making morally upright decisions on what materials to access on the laptop. Through the new Technology Camp for all incoming ninth graders, students engage in discussions around the responsible use of technology, and the pitfalls to social networking sites, off task behavior, cyber bullying, plagiarism and cheating.

The four Holy Cross themes have also been integrated into the daily life of the school, and where possible, throughout the content areas. This has been particularly evident during Spirit Week, and following the Morning Prayer. The themes are Building Respect, Educating Hearts and Minds, Being Family, and Bringing Hope.

## **Future and Ongoing Goals**

- Using the Lead Teacher to support departments in conducting their own action research based upon student achievement – areas of strength and weakness

- Continuing to use Curriculum Mapping to help in a regular review of the curriculum and assessment designs; also maximizing the opportunities of cross-curricular projects through awareness of content, skills and assessments

### ***Action Item #3: Service Learning and Campus Ministry***

Increase student awareness of the needs of their community and provide practical ways to address those needs through participation in the Service Learning program and Campus Ministry programs.

#### **Progress Update:**

In response to the need to further investigate the current Christian/Community Service program and the desire to increase the Service Learning opportunities for students, a task force was formed in the winter of 2008. The committee was chaired by the Assistant Principal of Instruction, and was comprised of faculty, staff, students and parents. The committee identified the need for more faculty training, support and guidance in implementing Service Learning projects that are directly connected with the content area learning. The committee also cited the need for a Service Learning coordinator to work with both internal and external constituents to help in facilitating the full integration of Service Learning projects. The extensive plan was proposed to both the Leadership Team and the Mission Integration Committee.

The Campus Ministry program at Moreau Catholic has also continued to foster greater student involvement and awareness of community needs. Students at the sophomore level participate in a Service Learning retreat where they visit St. Anthony's Dining Room in San Francisco, and spend the day giving back to the community. Through the ninth grade I-Search project, all freshmen are called to research a particular area of need in the community and complete service hours in that chosen field. Data from the Class of 2012 showed that 88% of students were more excited about supporting the organization and the service following the project than before. And, almost 100% of the students felt strongly in their learning as a result of the Service Learning project.

Based on student, parent and faculty feedback, it was also determined that a senior culminating retreat was needed. Therefore, during the 2007-2008 school year, teachers, students, and the Campus Ministry Coordinator participated in Kairos retreats with other schools. In the spring of 2009, we sent two groups of Moreau Catholic seniors on our first Kairos retreats. In order to gain faculty buy-in and support, the fall 2008 faculty and staff retreat was focused on understanding the Kairos retreat. In May of 2009, the faculty/staff meeting provided an update on the student, teacher, and parent experiences of those who attended Kairos.

#### **Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Continue with the integration of the Kairos retreat program for all senior students
- Implement the recommendations of the Service Learning Task Force

#### ***Action Item #4: Funding Resources***

Cultivate new and creative ways to increase funding resources to meet the future financial needs of the school.

##### **Progress Update:**

Growth in non-tuition income is a top priority for Moreau, and has seen significant progress in recent months. After a yearlong vacancy in the Director of Institutional Advancement, a director was hired in December and has developed a comprehensive development plan for the school. The plan outlines strategies to increase Moreau Fund revenue, improve alumni relations, increase revenue through private foundations and corporations, lower expenses and increase income in special events, and develop a planned giving program.

An immediate priority is to increase participation in The Moreau Fund by current parents, alumni and alumni families. Targeted appeals to these constituent groups have been developed, along with meaningful cultivation opportunities. The presentation to incoming parents regarding their four-year commitment to The Moreau Fund has also been adjusted to be more mission-focused and community-based. To improve the ease and convenience of making a donation, donors can now make a gift safely and securely through our website.

Funding for tuition assistance continues to be well supported through local foundations, including recent grants of \$20,000 from the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust and a renewed grant of \$35,000 from the Y&H Soda Foundation, to name a few. The Board of Trustees has committed to an additional \$100,000 in tuition assistance for the 2009-2010 year to meet the growing need for assistance from our incoming and current families. Moreau continues to present scholarships to 8th grade recipients at their graduation.

##### **Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Continue to explore additional opportunities to increase fundraising
- Develop a *Fund a Dream*-type luncheon event to raise money for tuition assistance
- Develop affinities with alumni and alumni parents to build stronger bonds to the school
- Create an Alumni Council to assist in bringing more alumni on campus and supporting more involvement in the life of the school
- Revamp the current student fundraiser to make participation more relevant and enticing to students

#### ***Action Item #5: Accountability and Communication***

Develop a comprehensive plan to ensure that accountability measures are incorporated into all schoolwide programs and new initiatives, including strategies to enhance communication among all stakeholders.

##### **Progress Update:**

The Office of Instruction has been providing faculty and staff with updates on student's achievement test data. This data has been part of faculty professional learning, faculty meeting time, Academic Council discussions, and department discussions. Student test data has also been



imported into PowerSchool in order to help in student placement in courses and the development of departmental pre-requisites.

In order to increase communication with parents and students, a telephone and email notification system was put in place. This is used to communicate with parents, students, faculty and staff any important announcements, reminders, or to be used in the case of an emergency. The counseling office also invested in a student counseling system called Naviance. Naviance is a web-based, content management system that provides a portal for family connection in the areas of academic advising, college and career counseling, achievement test updates, and overall academic support.

The Assistant Principal of Instruction and the Principal have focused on providing for all faculty and staff a year long meeting concept map to help communicate the vision and goals for meeting time and school wide professional learning. The concept map provides a thematic approach to academic council meetings, professional development time, and foci for department meetings. During the 2008-2009 school year, we also integrated faculty/staff meetings into the concept map, to allocate specific time for professional learning rather than reports and announcements. Following each professional learning day, feedback is collected from teachers to assess the degree to which the learning objectives were met.

Data has also become a key component for Advanced Placement teachers in assessing their curriculum in alignment with the AP Exam. At the fall 2008 Advanced Placement teacher meeting, all AP teachers came together to examine the data from the past two years, and develop a strategic plan to address needed areas of growth.

#### **Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Continue providing data in order to make informative decisions regarding student achievement and program success

#### ***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #1: Revision of the Moreau Catholic Action Plan***

The Visiting Committee recommends that the action plan be rewritten to provide clear, concise language that includes specific and measurable goals.

#### **Progress Update:**

This was completed immediately following the spring 2006 visit, and presented to the Visiting Committee Chair, Dorothy J. McCrea.

#### ***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #2: Master-Site Plan***

The Visiting Committee recommends a re-evaluation of the master site plan to include the athletic facilities as a priority. The Visiting Committee further recommends the addition of a full-time assistant to the Athletic Director.

**Progress Update:**

Moreau Catholic, upon the recommendation of the WCEA-WASC Visiting Committee, and an assessment of current needs, hired an Assistant to the Athletic Director in the fall of 2008 to fully support the needs of that office.

During the 2008-2009 school year, the entire Moreau Catholic High School community embarked upon the process of developing a new Master Site Plan that would serve as a vision and strategic plan moving forward. All stakeholders were involved in the process: faculty, staff, parents, students, board of trustees, and external community members. After a series of informational gathering sessions with architects from HKIT, plans were taken to the Leadership Team, Mission Integration Committee and Facilities Committee for further examination and analysis. The Board of Trustees was presented with several options for the Master Site Plan, and made a final decision to adopt one of the plans in January 2009. The Master Site Plan was then presented at the faculty/staff meeting and the Parent Club Meeting.

**Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Ongoing communication with community members and potential donors to help facilitate the first phase of the Master Site Plan: athletic facilities upgrades
- Longer term planning for the implementation of the other phases of the Master Site Plan

***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #3: Modern Language Department***

In an effort to meet the changing needs of the students and match current trends in instructional strategies, the Visiting Committee recommends that the Modern Language Department re-evaluate their course offerings and instructional strategies.

**Progress Update:**

After surveying both incoming students, current students, and our local Catholic support schools, the Modern Language department and the Assistant Principal of Instruction investigated the inclusion of a third language as part of the course offerings. Based upon survey results, current educational research, and the changing global economy, it was decided that Moreau Catholic would include Chinese as part of their Modern Language course offerings. Starting in 2007-2008, Moreau began with a first year level Chinese course. By 2010-2011, the Modern Language department plans to offer a fourth level, AP Chinese course.

With the inclusion of the laptop program, the Chinese classes offer an online, CD-Rom, interactive textbook that integrates reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students, parents, and external educators have praised the course as an exemplary model of technology integration, active student engagement, using collaborative learning and varied instructional strategies.

In response to the recommendation to provide more varied instructional strategies, that goal has been shared amongst all departments at Moreau Catholic, and not solely relocated to the Modern Language department. Through the schoolwide Classroom Walkthrough process, teachers have been examining the extent to which varied instructional strategies is present within the classroom. Administrators and teachers come together to conduct the Classroom Walkthrough

process 3 times a year, visiting every teacher's classroom. Data from these visits are then distributed and discussed at faculty meetings, department meetings and Academic Council meetings. Individual departments have also been critically examining the extent to which they deliberately plan for varied instructional strategies within their lesson plans in order to meet the needs of individual students.

#### **Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Review and assess department curriculum maps as a living and useful document for articulation of learning outcomes, and the inclusion of higher order thinking skills
- Aligning across content areas a researched and tested set of instructional strategies

#### ***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #4: Discipline Policy***

The Visiting Committee recommends a re-drafting and distributing of the discipline policy so that all students and staff have a clear understanding of the discipline policy and the persons responsible for the enforcement of the policy.

#### **Progress Update:**

In order to fully evaluate and revise the existing discipline policy, a discipline review committee was formed. The committee is comprised of members from all the various stakeholder groups: administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and parents. One of the first tasks that the committee took on was a thorough evaluation of the reasons for disciplinary action being taken. A database was formed to chart detentions throughout the year and disaggregate the data based on grade, gender, and reason for the disciplinary action.

The committee then began by distinguishing between a philosophy of discipline from the actual discipline code and enforcement procedures. Subsequently, they began a redrafting of particular sections of the handbook relating to the discipline policy.

Throughout the past three years, the committee has communicated the updates and changes with the faculty and staff, along with presentations of the data to support changes. Faculty and staff have been provided opportunities to engage in dialogue regarding the discipline philosophy and the specific code.

The Leadership Team has also been actively involved in reviewing the discipline policy in light of our Mission and Philosophy of education.

Over the past three years there has been a concerted effort to increase communication with students, and parents. The Assistant Principal for Student Welfare, and the chair of the Discipline Committee, has met with the 24 students on the Student Curriculum Committee to gain feedback and insights regarding the revisions. Additional communication with students has been facilitated through MCTV presentations, ongoing schoolwide announcements, posters, classroom visits, mailings home, On Course articles and via the website.

In order to more clearly communicate with parents, a telephone and email notification system was purchased. This past year, parents have received weekly phone messages if their student received a detention.

**Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Creation of benchmarks to monitor disciplinary action taken
- Ongoing feedback from teachers, students, parents and ongoing discussions with the Leadership Team

***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #5: Evaluation of Collaboration Choices***

To reduce the conflict of choice between clubs and academic tutoring during the collaboration period, the Visiting Committee recommends that staff explore developing choices where participation in clubs does not conflict with academics.

**Progress Update:**

In order to fully engage all stakeholders in an evaluation regarding collaboration, a committee was formed which includes administrators, faculty, counselors, and staff members. The committee began meeting during the 2007-2008 school year, and is still continuing to meet. In order to get a clearer sense of student and faculty needs, a schoolwide survey was launched during a homeroom period to collect information from current ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students, as well as faculty members.

The key findings of the initial data was that collaboration is valuable and valued by the community, however, it needs to be more clearly defined, with more structure in place to ensure clarity of expectations. A second survey, along with teacher interviews, was conducted to gain more in-depth knowledge. This revealed a strong need for designated days for academic and club or activity periods.

Early findings were presented to the Leadership Team, and the Mission Integration Committee. Both groups provided clarifying questions to help the Collaboration Committee focus their work for the upcoming semester, and moving forward.

**Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- The Collaboration Committee will continue to meet over the next year to review the data, engage all stakeholders in an evaluation of the recommendations, and establish a set of accountability measures to assess the success of the implemented changes

***WCEA-WASC Critical Area #6: Department Collaboration & Department Chair's Role***

The Visiting Committee recognizes the value to the students when teachers within each department share common goals and commitments and recommend that the department chair in each department be allocated time to complete this task within the academic day.

**Progress Update:**

Based on the recommendation from the WCEA-WASC visiting committee, Moreau Catholic removed from all Department Chair's contractual obligations, lunch supervision duties, and the mandated six substitutions. Department Chairs are now only called upon for supervision or substitution when expressly needed.

Academic council also conducted during the 2006-2007 school year a curriculum review, which brought together members from various departments to discuss curriculum practices and engage in cross-curricular dialogues. The focus of the year was on the *Critical Analysis of Student Learning* (CASL program from the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Design). Each month was focused on analyzing student work samples in connection with the school's ESLRs. As a result of this, it was determined that more foundational alignment of pedagogy and practice was needed to ensure all faculty were using research-based educational practices.

All department chairs were also given the opportunity to participate in a summer 2007 Leadership Training facilitated by Lorraine Ozar from the Loyola University of Chicago, Director for the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness. Out of the eleven department chairs, six current chairs participated, along with three additional department members. During the summer of 2008, all new and veteran department chairs were also part of a full day Department Training that focused on Instructional Leadership.

Academic Council time has also begun to mirror the shift in faculty-staff meetings; moving away from reports and announcements to time dedicated to learning.

**Future and Ongoing Goals:**

- Find more opportunities to recognize the value of department chairs
- Department Chair training in August 2009 on the use of Curriculum Mapping to reduce gaps and redundancies across the curriculum, and increase student achievement